

Shabbat Be'halot'cha

May 29, 2010

16 Sivan 5770

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News

SHAVUOT IMMERSION IN FLORIDA

Jeff sent us this news which we publish with pleasure "Shavuot, the feast of weeks, also called by the Greek name Pentecost, is a harvest festival. The only Biblical command regarding it was for all the men to come together to Jerusalem at the end of the spring harvest to bring their tithes and offerings to the Lord. Since Moses was up on Mt. Sinai during Shavuot a rabbinic tradition says that G-d gave Moses the Torah on that day. Since a large portion of the book of Ruth took place during the time of the spring harvest it is traditional to read that book during this feast.

A partial fulfillment of the Shavuot harvest was demonstrated 7 weeks after Yeshua's resurrection with a harvest of souls for heaven when G-d's Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples and 3,000 people were immersed in one day. All of these events tie together. The harvest is of people for the kingdom, the Holy Spirit is poured out to both draw us to accept the Messiah and to empower us to keep the commandments, and G-d's kingdom (as a result of the harvest) is made up of both Jews and Gentiles (Ruths and Boaz).



We commemorated Shavuot with 3 immersions, 2 in New Port Richey and 1 in St. Petersburg Florida.

SHAVUOT IMMERSION IN ISRAEL

The English speaking congregations were very happy to have their shavuot immersion as in Acts 2. Pastor Mendez sent this message:

"Last Sabbath was a memorable Sabbath for the Adventist English groups in Israel. Group of believers from Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem went to Yardenit, Jordan River, to witness the immersion of six new members. With them were non-Adventist friends. Some of these non-SDA friends have joined our small group ministries.



SABBATH IN MALIBU

For my last Sabbath in California I preached in the SDA church of Malibu. It was interesting to come back where I was last year and continue to train these members for the Jewish ministry. Malibu is one of the cities of Los Angeles County where many Jews are living. I pray that their ministry will be successful.





OVERVIEW

BE'HALOT'CHA NUMBERS 8:1 - 12:16

Aharon is taught the method for kindling the menorah. Moshe sanctifies the levi'im to work in the Mishkan. They replace the first-born, who were disqualified after sinning at the golden calf. The levi'im are commanded that after five years of training they are to serve in the Mishkan from ages 30 to 50; afterwards they are to engage in less strenuous work. One year after the Exodus from Egypt, G-d commands Moshe concerning the korban Pesach. Those ineligible for this offering request a remedy, and the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini, allowing a "second chance" to offer the korban Pesach one month later, is detailed. Miraculous clouds that hover near the Mishkan signal when to travel and when to camp. Two silver trumpets summon the princes or the entire nation for announcements.

The trumpets also signal travel plans, war or festivals. The order in which the tribes march is specified.

Moshe invites his father-in-law, Yitro, to join the Jewish People, but Yitro returns to Midian. At the instigation of the eruv rav — the mixed Egyptian multitude who joined the Jewish People in the Exodus — some people complain about the manna. Moshe protests that he is unable to govern the nation alone. G-d tells him to select 70 elders, the first Sanhedrin, to assist him, and informs him that the people will be given meat until they will be sickened by it. Two candidates for the group of elders prophesy beyond their mandate, foretelling that Yehoshua instead of Moshe will bring the people to Canaan. Some protest, including Yehoshua, but Moshe is pleased that others have become prophets. G-d sends an incessant supply of quail for those who complained that they lacked meat. A plague punishes those who complained. Miriam tries to make a constructive remark to Aharon which also implies that Moshe is only like other prophets. G-d explains that Moshe's prophecy is

superior to that of any other prophet, and punishes Miriam with tzara'at because she gossiped about her brother. Moshe prays for her, and the nation waits until she is cured before traveling.

COMPLAINING

The Torah states: "And the people were complaining in a bad way in the ears of the Almighty" (Numbers 11:1). Rashi comments that when the people were complaining, they had no real cause to complain; they were just looking for an excuse to separate themselves from the Almighty. By finding what would sound like a complaint, they felt justified in keeping a distance from the Creator.

When someone realizes all that the Almighty does for him, he will not have a complaining attitude. There are times when a person is has unfulfilled needs and times when he is suffering. That is a time for action and prayer.

Rabbi Packouz says "Complaining, however, is wrong. The underlying theme behind a complainer is not necessarily that he wants the situation to improve, but that he wants to have the benefits of complaining—to feel free from the obligations for all the good that the other person (or the Almighty) has done. Ultimately, a person who goes through life complaining does not appreciate the good in his life.

When one focuses only on what he is missing, he blinds himself to what he does have. No matter how much you do have, there will always be something to complain about if you look hard enough. This attitude is not merely a means by which a person causes himself a miserable existence. It is a direct contradiction to our obligation to be grateful to the Almighty. Anyone having this negative attitude must make a concerted effort to build up the habit of appreciating what he has and what happens to him. This is crucial for both spiritual reasons and for happiness in life. This especially applies to one's relationship with his or her spouse!

MAKE HIS WILL TO BE YOUR WILL

In Numbers 8:2 Aaron HaKohen is commanded to light the holy menorah in the Tabernacle. This is juxtaposed to the preceding passage dealing with the consecration, "chanukah" in

Hebrew, of the Tabernacle by the leaders of the tribes. The kohanim, not being an official tribe, were excluded from this ceremony. And even though the entire Temple service belongs to Aaron and his descendants, still he felt left out and disappointed. Rabban Gamliel said, “Make His desire like it was your desire, so that He’ll make your desire His desire.” (Avot 2:4).

Rabbi Max Weiman from Aish.com says “It is the desire of the Almighty that we reach the greatest heights of spiritual accomplishment. Whenever you have a spiritual aspiration, you are making G-d’s will your will. Whenever you pray for the welfare of humanity, for universal consciousness of His presence, or for others to be happy and healthy, you are making His will your will. Every prayer that goes up to Heaven may not get answered the way we want it to, not in the time or place we want it to, but it doesn’t just dissipate into the atmosphere. That’s not how the spiritual realm works. Every prayer, every good desire, gets logged in and inevitably has some effect. The heavenly balance of justice demands it.”

LIGHTING THE MENORAH

When Aaron is told to light the Menorah in the Temple, the Torah uses an unusual word *Behalot’cha* which is actually the name of this week’s Torah portion. *Behalot’cha* literally means that Aaron should “lift up” the flames. Rashi explains that Aaron was meant to hold the light the Menorah’s wicks until they’re not just catching fire, but actually burning strongly themselves—and only then to take the light away.

In the book of Psalm it is written, “**Your word is a lamp to my feet, And a light for my path**” (119:105). In the Brith Hachadasha Yeshua is presented as our High Priest, it means that Aaron lighting the Menorah represents Yeshua teaching—“enlightening”—his disciples, that’s why Yeshua is also called the Word of G-d “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with G-d, and the Word was G-d.**” (Yochanan 1:1) who dwell among us “**The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.**” (Yochanan 1:14).

LIGHT OF G-D SHINES

The Torah states, “**When you light the Menorah, be sure that the outer lamps face the center**” (Numbers 8:2). Why when worshiping the Almighty, the light of G-d is so crucial that it must “face the center”, because science or knowledge without G-d is useless.

Rabbi Shraga Simmons says “Greece was once a mighty empire. The Greeks promoted beautiful fashion, fine dining, sonorous music, aesthetic arts, vigorous athletics, and captivating entertainment. In the essential fields of scholarship, the Greeks were the most advanced and sophisticated of their time. But why didn’t the Greek empire survive for more than a few hundred years? Historians concur they were destroyed by moral decay. Jealousy, greed and promiscuity eroded the society until it crumbled. “Knowledge” without God is a recipe for disaster. We simply cannot and will not survive without a clear moral direction.

The Greeks had gods—an entire pantheon, in fact. But these were man-made gods, the kind that get jealous and argue and commit immoral behavior of their own. Man cannot develop his own objective system, because man—as part of the group that the system is designed for—is inherently subjective. The Greek gods were not the kind to aspire to, rather these gods were invented to excuse man’s own corrupt behavior.

The most jarring example, of course, is Nazi Germany. Germany was known for it’s leading academic institutions, advancement in the arts, and impeccable social conduct. Where did it all lead? At the Wannsee Conference (the Nazi meeting to formulate the “Final Solution” for the extermination of Jews), 9 of the 13 participants were Ph.D.s. These were the most creative, scientific minds in the entire civilized world. Yet in a remarkable act of self-deception, they were able to redefine “morality” toward ultimate evil. It was a Godless technology, knowledge without wisdom.” What is good and evil cannot be known without the light of G-d, David one day said “**Many say, “Who will show us any good?” Yahweh, let the light of your face shine on us.**” (Ps 4:6). Yeshua is the light who came to this world “**The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world.**” (Yochanan 1:9) If we want to know what is good, we should read his teaching in the gospels.

THE WEALTHIEST JEW

Yankel was a vagabond. Every Friday he would spend the last of his few zloty at the bathhouse and barber and, well groomed, he would present himself in the synagogue as a respected business person from out-of-town. Then he would usually get a sumptuous Shabbat meal at the home of the wealthiest Jew in town. One Friday afternoon he was in the city of Lodz and inquired about the wealthiest Jew. “Velvel, the banker,” he was told “is definitely the wealthiest Jew. But he is also the stingiest. You never get a chance to eat the delicious dishes that he serves you!”

“How’s that?” asked Yankel.

“Well, as soon as you take your first bite he engages you in conversation. You begin to speak, and as soon as your eyes leave your plate, a waiter comes and snatches your food away!”

With a game plan in mind Yankel posed as a businessman from Warsaw, and got invited to Reb Velvel’s magnificent home. The table was set with exquisite china, and the delicious smells wafting from the kitchen made Yankel’s hungry mouth water.

After kiddush and challah, the first course was served, a succulent piece of white fish stuffed with gefilte fish. As Yankel speared it with his fork a voice boomed from the head of the table.

“So, Yankel, tell me, how is my cousin Shloime feeling? You must know Shloime, the tailor of Podolska Street in Warsaw?”

Yankel kept his fork embedded in the fish and held tight as he nodded somberly. “He’s dead.”

“What?” shrieked Reb Velvel, “Shloime is dead? How can that be?” He ran to the kitchen and shouted for his wife, while Yankel managed to finish his fish in comfort. He even got in a few nibbles off an adjoining plate. After the shock wore off, they served the soup.

After the first sip, the banker was quick to his old ways. “You don’t happen to know my father’s brother Reb Dovid the bookbinder, do you?”

With the waiter poised to pounce, Yankel nodded again. “He died too!”

“What?” cried the stunned host. “How can that be? I just got a letter from him last week!”

He ran next door to tell his brother the terrible news—while Yankel calmly finished his soup.

The main course, with chicken, kugel and tzimmes also saw the death of more members of the Warsaw community, each tiding throwing the banker into a tizzy. Meanwhile Yankel ate his portion and all the portions of those who were sickened by the terrible news that they had just heard.

By the time dessert came, the banker got hold of the scheme.

“What’s going on?” He shouted. “Are you trying to tell me that the entire Warsaw has dropped dead?”

“No,” answered Yankel, “what I am trying to tell you is that when I eat, the whole world drops dead!”

The blessing of plenty is worthless without serenity. Peace in your land is not only a blessing for military men. It is a blessing that enhances every aspect of life, from breaking ground to breaking bread. What good are storehouses of plenty or a wonderful economy without the peace and harmony in which to enjoy them?

Calm and composure are the greatest blessing. For without them, the bread of plenty can still be bread of affliction. The Torah does not give half-baked blessings. It tells us that we will eat our bread to satisfaction because it guarantees us peace in our land. For we must not only pray for sustenance, but also health, well being, and serenity with which to enjoy it.”

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

Zechariah 2:14 - 4:7

BESORAT YESHUA

Mark 4:21-34

PARASHA: In the text of the parasha the L-rd commanded Aaron to atone the Cohanim: **“When you bring the Levites before the L-RD, the Israelites shall lay their hands on the Levites, and Aaron shall present the Levites before the L-RD as an elevation offering from the Israelites, that they may do the service of the L-RD. The Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, and he shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering to the L-RD, to make atonement for the Levites.”** (Num. 8:10-12).

HAFTARA: Our haftara is about another priest. **“Then he showed me the Cohen Hagadol Joshua standing before the angel of the L-RD”** (Zec 3:1).

We have in this haftara a beautiful story about Joshua the Cohen Hagadol, Zerubbabel and the angel of the L-rd. We have already spoken about the angel of the L-rd, a special angel who is the great Michael, the one who has the power to forgive the sins of Israel (Exodus 23:20). In our story the angel came to give forgiveness to the Cohen Hagadol Joshua. **“Now Joshua was dressed with filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.” And to him he said, “See, I have taken your guilt away from you, and I will clothe you with festal apparel.” And I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with the apparel; and the angel of the L-RD was standing by. .** (Zech. 3:3-5).

But also to give to Joshua a special message: **“If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.”** (Zech. 3:7). For G-d the requirement is always the same, to be faithful to him. Then the angel give a wonderful promise, the promise of the Messiah called “the Branch”

“Now listen, Joshua, Cohen Hagadol, you and your colleagues who sit before you! For they are an omen of things to come: I am going to bring my servant the Branch.” (Zech. 3:8) This “branch” is a branch coming from the genealogy or “tree” of Jesse and it is called the “Branch of the L-rd” (Isaiah 4:2). It is Messiah. Yeshua is a descendant of Jesse and David, He is the “Branch.”

PARASHA: The parasha of this week is called *Beha'alotcha*, which means “elevate”, that’s why when G-d gave instructions to Aaron about the menorah, instead of using the word *Lehadlik* to “kindle,” the Torah uses the word *Beha'alotcha* which literally means to “elevate.”

“Aaron did so; he set up its lamps to give light in front of the lampstands, as the L-RD had commanded Moses.” (Numbers 8:3).

BESORAH: In this text Yeshua give order about the menorah and said: **“Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstands? For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”** (Mark 4:21-23).

In Numbers 10, G-d gives to Moses the march order of the tribes of Israel, this reminds us the kingdom of G-d which is described in the book of revelation 21:12 where the gates are symbolized by the tribes of Israel.

In the Besorah Yeshua give some parable about the kingdom of G-d. **“The kingdom of G-d is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.”** (Mark 4:26-29). When we spread the gospel, the seeds of the good news, the Holy Spirit works and allows it to grow night and day.

Then Yeshua gave another parable about the Kingdom of G-d, **“With what can we compare the kingdom of G-d, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”** (Mark 4:30-32). Even though the kingdom started small it become bigger by the work of the Holy Spirit.

